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TAGS PINT, UY

SUBJ: BORDABERRY COMMENTS ON ROLE OF ARMED FORCES IN THE
POLITICAL PROCESS AND ON ELECTIONA

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: IN A SPEECH MARKING THE END OF THE YEAR,
PRESIDENT BORDABERRY ASSURED THE ARMED FORCES THAT HE
BELIEVED THEY WERE PERFORMING THEIR DUTY BY EXERCISING
POWER IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND THAT THIS EXERCISE
OF POWER COULD NOT BECOME A MATTER OF DEBATE AMONG THE
PEOPLE. THE PRESIDENT SAID THE ARMED
FORCES WOULD NOT
BE JUDGED EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY BY THE
PEOPLE,
ONLY BY THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES AND BY HISTORY.

IN A SEPARATE INTERVIEW BORDABERRY SAID THE PROCESS
OF RENOVATING THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL IT
WAS FINISHED, BUT HE PERSONALLY DID NOT ASPIRE TO STAY
ON BEYOND HIS CONSTITUTIONALLY MANDATED TERM OF OFFICE.

2. SPEECH TO OFFICERS OF ARMED FORCES: IN A YEAR'S
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END SPEECH TO HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS, PRESIDENT

BORDABERRY PRESENTED A POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN URUGUAY.

3. THE PRESIDENT FIRST SAID THAT THE MAJOR EFFORT OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE COMMANDERS IN CHIEF, WAS THE INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING OF THE "NEW URUGUAY."

4. "I THINK THAT IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR," HE SAID, "...WE ARE GOING TO HEAR OPINIONS ABOUT WHICH ROAD TO FOLLOW AND THAT THE ARMED FORCES MUST HAVE THE GREAT ASSURANCE OF KNOWING THAT THEIR POSITION, THE FACT OF ACCOMPANYING AND BACKING THE GOVERNMENT IN THE HISTORIC EVENTS OF JUNE, 1973, CANNOT BE JUDGED BY THE CITIZENRY, BECAUSE THIS POSITION IS NOT THE POSITION OF A POLITICAL PARTY, IT IS NOT THE POSITION OF A PERSON, IT IS SIMPLY THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY: THE DUTY TO SERVE ONE'S COUNTRY, A COUNTRY WEAKENED BY OMISSION IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY BY THOSE WHO HAD THE OBLIGATION FOR DUTY."

5. THE PRESIDENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT BY JUNE 1973 THE LAW WAS A "DEAD LETTER" AND THEREFORE "WHEN THE ARMED FORCES SUPPORTED THE ACTS OF JUNE 1973, THEY WERE NOT BACKING THE PERSONAL AMBITIONS OF ANYONE, NOR WERE THEY BACKING A COMMON BARRACKS REVOLT...THEY WERE SIMPLY PERFORMING THEIR DUTY: GIVING TO THE LAW AND THE GOVERNMENT LIFE AND A POWER BASE WHICH THOSE WHO HAD THE OBLIGATION TO DO SO HAD NOT DONE SO."

6. "THIS," HE SAID, "IS FUNDAMENTAL BECAUSE IN THE FIRST PLACE IT IS THE BASIS OF THE LEGITIMACY OF THE POSITION OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND THE ILLEGITIMACY OF THE POSITIONS OF THOSE WHO DID NOT PERFORM THEIR DUTY."

7. "IN THE SECOND PLACE, "THE PRESIDENT CONCLUDED, "...THIS CONDUCT OF THE ARMED FORCES CANNOT ENTER INTO THE AREA OF OPINION, IT CANNOT BE EXPOSED TO THE JUDGMENT OF THE CITIZENRY BECAUSE IT IS NOT A POLITICAL PARTY WHICH ASSUMED SUCH CONDUCT, BUT IT IS THE INSTITUTION OF THE ARMED FORCES PERFORMING THEIR DUTY."

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8. THE PRESIDENT ENDED BY TELLING HIS AUDIENCE THAT WHAT HE WAS SAYING WAS THE FRUIT OF LONG HOURS OF MEDITATION AND REFLECTION AND HE THOUGHT THAT TO TRY TO JUDGE THE CONDUCT OF THE ARMED FORCES BY THE CLASSIC DEMOCRATIC PROCEEDINGS IS LIKE TRYING TO JUDGE A MAN WHO HAS VIOLATED FORMAL LEGAL NORMS IN ORDER TO DEFEND HIS MOTHER.

9. FINALLY, HE SAID, "NEITHER DIRECTLY NOR INDIRECTLY WILL THE CONDUCT OF THE ARMED FORCES BE SUBMITTED TO THE JUDGEMENT OF THE CITIZENRY AS IF IT WERE A COMMON POLITICAL POSITION. THE JUDGEMENT, THE ONLY JUDGEMENT THAT COUNTS IS THAT OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE AND THAT OF HISTORY."

10. BORDABERRY COMMENTS ON ELECTIONS: IN AN UNRELATED, BUT COMPLEMENTARY INTERVIEW THE PRESIDENT EXPLAINED HIS POSITION IN THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENT. THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE WITH A REPORTER FROM THE BRAZILIAN MAGAZINE, VEJA, WHICH WAS REPRINTED IN EL PAIS OF MONTEVIDEO.

1. BORDABERRY WAS ASKED HOW HE COULD SAY THAT HE DIDN'T INTEND TO STAY ON AS PRESIDENT BEYOND THE CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS WHILE ALSO SAYING THAT THE PRESENT POLITICAL PROCESS COULD NOT BE LIMITED BY FIXED DATES. HE REPLIED THAT WHEN HE SPOKE OF THERE BEING NO FIXED DATES FOR THE PROCESS HE WAS BY NO MEANS SAYING HE PERSONALLY WOULD CONTINUE IN OFFICE, BUT THAT THE PROCESS ITSELF WOULD CONTINUE.

12. THE PRESIDENT ELABORATED, "WHEN ONE LIVES THROUGH A PROCESS OR A COUNTRY DOES, AS URUGUAY IS LIVING, OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ALL ORDERS AND OF THE RENOVATION OF A NEW STATE IN THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL ORDERS, WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THE PROCESS, NOT THE DATES. WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS TO END THE PROCESS, NOT END IT IN A CERTAIN FIXED TIME.

13. "BUT WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE PROCESS, AND THIS PROCESS IS IMPERSONAL, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BECAUSE IT'S A NATIONAL PROCESS. THEREFORE, THE PERSON WHO IS ACCIDENTALLY PLACED AT THE FRONT OF THE PROCESS IS NOT ONE OF ITS ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS."

14. THE PRESIDENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE ELECTIONS OF THE KIND PREVIOUSLY HELD IN THE COUNTRY. "ELECTIONS UTILIZING MEANS SUCH AS DEMAGOGUERY, ELECTORAL PROMISES, AT THE COST OF THE ECONOMY AND THE WELFARE OF THE POPULACE, THE FICTION OF REPRESENTATION, THE AGGRESSION BY ELECTORAL PROPAGANDA ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY, THIS WE'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE, BECAUSE WE CAN'T HAVE IT AGAIN IN THE STATE WE IMAGINE FOR THE FUTURE."

15. "MEANS FOR THE EXPRESSION OF POPULAR FEELING AND FOR CITIZENS PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL LIFE, THAT YOU

CAN BE SURE WE WILL HAVE."

COMMENTS:

16. THE PRESIDENT, IN BOTH THE SPEECH, AND IN THE REMARKS EXCERPTED FROM THE INTERVIEW, REITERATES HIS POSITION THAT THE PRESENT POLITICAL REALITY IS BOTH NECESSARY AND LEGITIMATE IN LIGHT OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO JUNE, 1973.

17. HE EMPHASIZES THE DIVORCE OF INSTITUTIONAL FROM PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. HE CHARACTERIZES THE ARMED FORCES AS AN INSTITUTION RATHER THAN AS AN ORGANIZATION MADE UP OF INDIVIDUALS, AND FOCUSES ON THE IDEA THAT THE INSTITUTION CANNOT BE SUBJECT TO THE JUDGEMENT OF THE BODY POLITIC. HE CHARACTERIZES HIMSELF AS AN ACCIDENTAL PERSONAGE ON THE SCENE, RATHER THAN AS AN IMPORTANT ACTOR IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES OF THE STATE.

18. THE PRESIDENT, WHILE STILL NOT RULING OUT ELECTION, INFERS THAT IF NECESSARY THE PRESENT POLITICAL POSTURE COULD CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. HE REEMPHASIZES THE GOU'S POLICY THAT THE FORMER ELECTION SYSTEM PRODUCED CHAOS AND THAT IT MUST BE REPLACED, BUT HE DOES NOT OFFER FURTHER ENLIGHTENMENT ON ANY NEW OR REVISED POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

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